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ABSTRACT

At Mount San Antonio College (MSAC) in Walnut, California, a full-time classified position of Articulation Specialist was created in 1989 to help the college's articulation officer establish the necessary articulation agreements for facilitating the transfer of MSAC students to four-year institutions. In addition, articulation officers from the 13 community colleges in MSAC's region meet on a monthly basis to discuss current articulation efforts, and two- and four-year college articulation representatives from the region meet at least two times each semester. The MSAC Transfer Center, 1 of 20 state-funded pilot projects operated cooperatively with the University of California and the California State University, provides resources and services to assist students in formulating their transfer goals and developing a plan to achieve them. The Center coordinates university campus tours, transfer workshops, and offers walk-in educational advisement, and a catalog and video library for research. The five external factors which have the greatest impact on a college's articulation and transfer efforts, and which are generally beyond the control of the college are economics, student demographics (which impact allocations of outside funds), community involvement, the proximity of primary transfer institutions, and the financing structure and state policy. Internal factors which affect articulation and transfer efforts include college mission and goals, organizational structure, administrative environment, and district funding. Achieving and maintaining financial and administrative support constitute the greatest challenges facing a college's transfer and articulation efforts. (PAA)

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Transfer and Articulation: Gaining Institutional Support and Developing Regional Relationships

by

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TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION: GAINING INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND DEVELOPING REGIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

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Articulation

I. Introduction

The dictionary definition of articulation according to Webster's is the "action or manner of joining or interrelating" or "the act or manner of articulating sounds." In California higher education articulation, the first definition is used. Articulation officers from the universities and community colleges work together with their faculty to establish articulation agreements: course-by-course, major preparation, general education/breadth, and transferable course agreements.

Higher education in California is complex. There are 107 community colleges, 20 California State University (CSU) campuses, 9 University of California (UC) campuses, and approximately 70 private universities. The student population in California is very mobile, it is not uncommon for students to attend several different colleges or universities during their academic career. There is little commonality among the different segments of higher education. In recent years there has been more intersegmental cooperation to assist in the articulation and transfer process.

In keeping with the Master Plan for Higher Education in the State of California, universities have established articulation agreements to help facilitate the transfer of students so that they may have adequate preparation and progress towards their goal of a bachelor's degree.

Mt. San Antonio College is committed to the transfer function of the College. A full-time classified position of Articulation Specialist was created in 1989. The job duties include assisting the Articulation Officer in researching course articulation matters, preparing course articulation requests, arranging college faculty to university faculty articulation meetings, and entering articulation data into the College data base.

II. Current Status

To support the articulation process, Mt. San Antonio College is involved with many regional projects. Our particular region in California has 13 community colleges, two CSU campuses, one UC campus, and seven

private universities. Community college articulation officers meet monthly to discuss current articulation issues. The transfer universities and community colleges meet twice a semester as the South Coast Higher Education Council (SCHEC). In addition to these meetings, there are many UC/CSU faculty and liaison meetings.

On our particular campus the Articulation Officer and Articulation Specialist are included in academic department meetings, flex day presentations, counselor/advisor meetings, individual faculty meetings, and serve on the curriculum committee. When developing new courses, faculty are required to consult with the Articulation Officer and Articulation Specialist concerning articulation issues.

Some publications and systems that have been developed and/or maintained by our office are: an articulation update newsletter which is distributed to counselors and advisors and appropriate instructional personnel, an on-line computerized articulation program (ARTIC), and major preparation sheets for our five main transfer universities. The major preparation sheets are constructed based upon approved university articulation. This way, students can be assured that the courses which they take will be accepted towards their major at the university.

III. Future Goals and Plans

We are moving toward a paperless system. Electronic transfer of transcripts is current project. Transcripts will be received by the university with general education certified. On-line major preparation sheets will make it possible to assure more accuracy of information. Changes in the data will be accessed more readily.

Our goal is to empower the faculty to become our partners in the articulation and transfer process. This results in a faculty more informed of student transfer issues and keeps them current with university curriculum. We continue to promote articulation and ourselves as resource persons and facilitators.

A Plan for Implementing the Transfer Center Pilot Program

I. Background

The Governor's 1985 budget proposed a total of $3.373 million to fund the first of a three-year pilot program in which the California Community Colleges (CCC), the University of California (UC), and the California State University (CSU) will cooperatively establish and operate up to 20 transfer centers at selected community colleges. The proposal provided $1.837 million for community colleges and $750,000 each for the UC and CSU. Of these amounts, the universities were expected to utilize $250,000 each in conjunction with an appropriate amount from community college funding, to operate and test as a companion to several transfer centers a computer course and program information system named ASSIST (Articulation System to Stimulate Inter-institutional Student Transfer).

II. Transfer Center - definition and services

The Mt. San Antonio College Transfer Center was developed to assist students in their transfer preparation to the college or university of their choice. It is essentially a liaison between Mt. San Antonio College and the campuses of the University of California, the California State University system, independent, as well as out-of-state colleges and universities.

The Transfer Center's resources and services are designed to assist students in formulating their transfer goals and developing a plan to achieve them. We offer walk-in educational advisement, transfer admission agreements with specific universities, and a catalog and video library for their research. The Transfer Center also coordinates university campus tours, the college fairs and a variety of transfer workshops such as: application preparation for admissions or financial aid, scholarship searching, essay application assistance, etc.

III. Gaining Institutional Support

Institutional support is an essential key in the development of an efficient and effective Transfer Center. The California Community College Chancellor's Office had identified the minimum standards, but in order to be successful it will require maximum institutional commitment. The Transfer Center needs to be incorporated into the College environment from the very beginning, for example, the College Mission and Goals or in the Strategic Plan. Another good measure of institutional support will usually be reflected in the local and statewide financing structure. It is extremely difficult to run a high quality program with insufficient funding.

IV. Developing Regional Relationships

The regional Transfer Center Directors meet on a monthly basis to provide a support network by sharing our successes, frustrations and solutions. We also use this time for collective creativity on how our Centers can improve or expand the services we currently offer. The regional meetings have also provided supplemental training for the new directors.

Ideal conditions often exist in your own backyard if you take the time to cultivate them. We have developed many cooperative ventures with our local transfer institutions, which include university tours, shared employees, joint advisory boards, etc. Community involvement can also assist in obtaining scholarships, offering professional mentors and volunteer support.

V. Future Goals and Plans

Again, as in articulation we want to move into a paperless system of transfer. One of the goals would be to create documents upon student request which would be specifically designed to meet student individual needs such as major preparation sheets, transfer evaluations, graduation checks and university catalog information. A long range goal would include having computer terminals available for students to complete their university application, then send it electronically and receive immediate notification of acceptance. We are continually improving on the quality and quantity of services we provide with a goal of developing a one stop transfer service center.

TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION: GAINING INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND DEVELOPING REGIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Enhancing the community college transfer function and developing institutional support and regional relationships may be why you selected this session today. I am glad you are here because that must indicate there is some interest in enhancing the transfer effectiveness on your campus. But, how you develop and maintain transfer effectiveness may vary from one institution to another.

Today there are many obstacles confronting the transfer function as an institutional priority. The National Effective Transfer Consortium (NETC), has published an executive summary entitled **Enhancing Transfer Effectiveness, A model for the 1990's.** I would like to examine a few of the internal and external factors affecting transfer identified in this report. And finally,I would like to talk about some regional activities that have enhanced our transfer and articulation efforts.

First, I would like to focus on five of the external factors which I felt would have the greatest impact on my campus.

1. ECONOMICS — It is extremely difficult to run a high quality program with insufficient funding.

2. STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS — Your ethnic distribution can be an influential tool in getting more

funding or representation from your primary transfer institutions.

3. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Can assist you in obtaining scholarships and community support.

4. PROXIMITY OF PRIMARY TRANSFER INSTITUTIONS

Ideal conditions often exist in your own backyard if you take the time to cultivate them. For example Cal Poly Pomona is on our campus 3 times a week at minimum. We have developed many cooperative ventures with our local transfer institutions, which include university tours, shared employees, joint advisory boards, shared housing, etc.

5. FINANCING STRUCTURE AND STATE POLICY

Our California Community College Chancellor's Office has carefully specified minimum standards of institutional support in the Master grant Agreement. This agreement states that the purpose of the Transfer Center is to strengthen the transfer function which also includes a commitment to improve curricular, articulation and transfer services.

Now that we have briefly identified some of the external factors, let us look at the internal factors facing the transfer function.

1. **COLLEGE MISSION AND GOALS** Is the transfer function identified as an institutional priority? This is an excellent opportunity to integrate the transfer function more closely with the Strategic Plan and College objectives.

2. **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE** Where is the Transfer Center located on your management organizational chart? To whom do you report? And are you in a position to attain the required institutional attention? One of the first things I did at Mt. SAC was to carefully review the College's Administrative Regulations and Procedures. It was a thick book with no pictures, but it did provide me with essential information on the internal organization of the college. I remember looking at the management organizational chart and finding my box at the bottom of the chart.

   Therefore, I knew that I was not going to obtain internal cooperation merely by my position on the charts. I then reviewed the job descriptions of all the other boxes and how their position could assist in the

transfer function. I found this process to be very useful in developing a plan of action and identifying potential support services.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE ENVIRONMENT

Our Chancellor's Office has identified the minimum standards but in order to be successful it will require a maximum institutional commitment. Your success will breed success or in other words additional assignments. There are many activities that affect the transfer function you might find them all coming your way such as:

1. Articulation
2. The Talent Roster of Outstanding Minority Community College Graduates or other scholarship listing
3. Transfer Days
4. Guarantee Admissions Agreements
5. CAN
6. Project ASSIST

All of these are great opportunities which enhance the transfer function on your campus. But, keep in mind you are only one person and can not always perform at Superman or Superwoman level. Before accepting these wonderful opportunities be sure you are set up for success. By this I mean adequate

funding for each assignment and sufficient support staff is essential.
I would recommend not only look at how other departments could assist in the transfer function but how the Transfer Center could become an integral part of the campus community. I think it is very important that you become involved in a variety of committees in order to:

1. demonstrate you are a team player
2. increase the Center's visibility
3. and enhance your own professional development
4. all these will allow you to get to know the key campus players and they in turn will know who you are.

4. DISTRICT FUNDING

This is an excellent opportunity for your institution to demonstrate their support. Ask your senior administrators how you can be more effective in your budget process.
(ie. National Institute for Leadership Development)

Now taking those factors into consideration you need to discover how the transfer function can attain or maintain institutional priority. I intentionally used the word discover because I do not believe you ever really find it, you just continually build on positive approaches and try not to repeat the failures!

It also helps to take a fresh approach and consider all possible avenues to gaining institutional support from the various campus contingencies, which include your faculty, staff, students, community and administration.

I recommend taking a campus tour to thoroughly evaluate existing Student Services from a students' perspective and ask students how they find out how to transfer. Then I would take a similar inventory for the College administration.

On my campus tour I noticed we had a few marquees surrounding the campus and one in front of the Student Affairs building. I also found one silent radio on campus and across the street in the yogurt shop. Then I also picked up the student newspaper and the college newsletter. Those are just a few of the existing advertisement possibilities that I observed.

I also found it helpful to consult my regional partners in transfer which include other community colleges and the primary transfer institutions. In doing this, we shared successful transfer programs, discussed problems and possible solutions but most of all we were a support network.

As I mentioned before ideal conditions often exist in your own backyard and as a region we have been effective in implementing many of our creative ideas such as:

1. The Regional University Tour Program

2. Joint advisory boards meetings

3. Regional transfer agreements with the universities

4. Regional grant writing

5. Conducted regional university information sessions

6. Regional training sessions and conferences

7. Developed a catalog exchange program

8. Articulation grid

9. College fairs

10. Regional of letters (ie. save a position, research or inquiry)

These are just a few of our successful regional endeavors which have proven to be beneficial. Each us will vary on our institutional approach to gaining and maintaining support. At Mt.SAC I found that increasing activities and level of funding in all of the following areas: campus awareness, faculty participation, district contributions, staff, transfer services offered, office hours, publicity, student usage, and facilities meaning furniture,equipment and square footage to be effective in enhancing transfer.

Today we have examined the external factors which are beyond a college's control and the internal factors which are primarily controlled by the college. And, finally the benefits of developing regional relationships to promote transfer and articulation.

Hopefully, some of these ideas will assist you in enhancing the community college transfer function on your campus.

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